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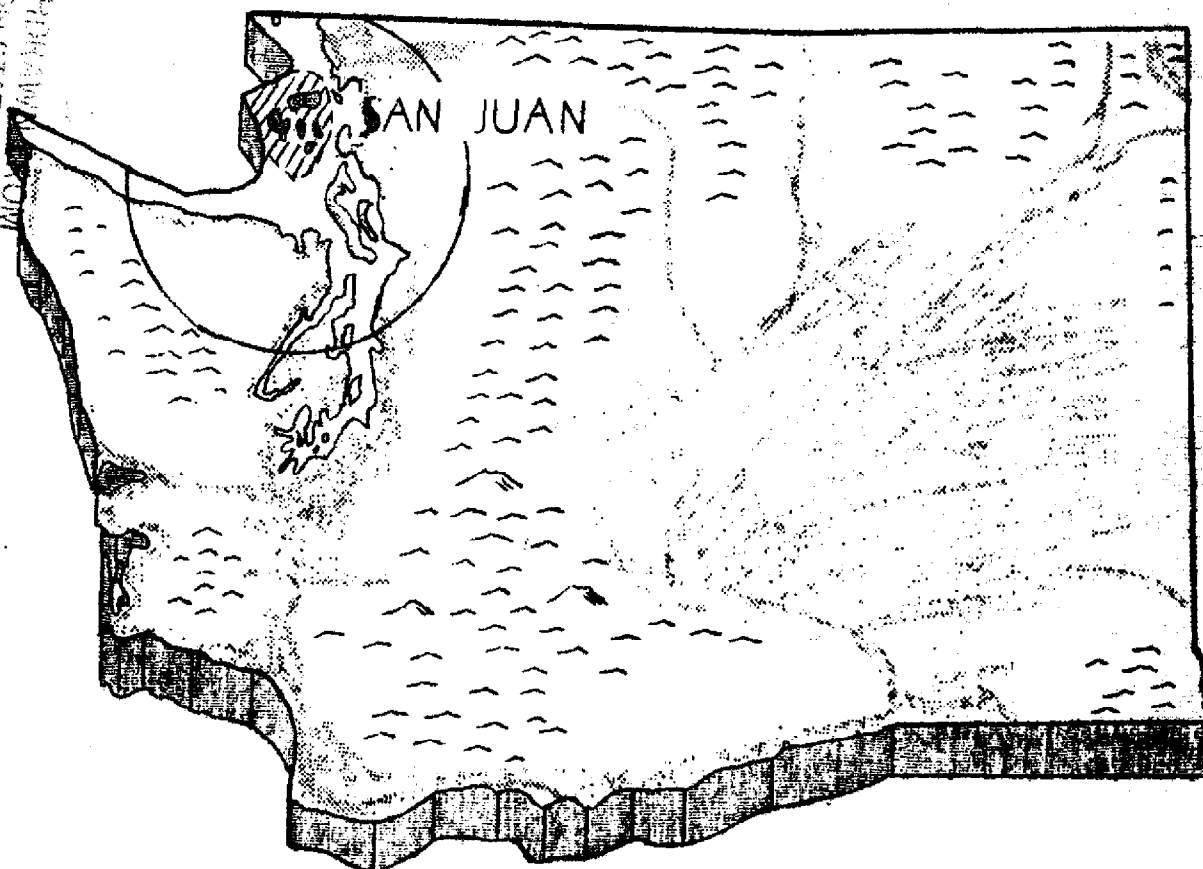
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SAN JUAN COUNTY AGRICULTURE

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COUNTY AGRICULTURAL DATA SERIES
1956

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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Joseph D. Dyer, Director

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Agricultural Marketing Service
S. R. Nowell

WASHINGTON CROP AND LIVESTOCK REPORTING SERVICE
348 Federal Office Building
Seattle 4, Washington

FOREWORD

This book on San Juan County is one of an original series being devoted to the history and present nature of agriculture in each of the thirty-nine counties of the State of Washington. This project was initiated in 1956 through funds made available by Sverre N. Omdahl, Director, Washington State Department of Agriculture, 1948-56. State funds were matched by moneys from the United States Department of Agriculture under the Research and Marketing Act of 1946.

County agricultural data books are intended to serve a variety of needs. Continually changing conditions in a dynamic state such as Washington require constant planning by groups and individuals both in private enterprise and public service. Comprehensive knowledge of land resources, population and agricultural-economic trends in a local area such as San Juan County is of great value. This book will be useful for reference in public and private instruction by vocational agriculture and social studies teachers in San Juan County schools. It has been devised also to inform adults interested in knowing more about their immediate area, as well as persons and enterprises concerned with agricultural production and marketing or prospective settlement and investment in the county.

Carefully selected geographic facts, agricultural history, population trends and statistical data are included to give an over-all appreciation of San Juan County. The enumerations of the United States Censuses of Population and Agriculture since 1880 and recent estimates of the Washington State Census Board are summarized to give a perspective of development since the establishment of San Juan County in 1873. Facts on topography, soil, climate and forests which influence farming are integrated from surveys and reports of government agencies. Estimates of leading crops by years since 1939 by the Washington Crop and Livestock Reporting Service provide a measure of the trend in the agriculture of the county farm industry.

Acknowledgment is accorded the professional work of several persons. Immediate direction was under Emery C. Wilcox, Agricultural Statistician in Charge, Estimates Division, Agricultural Marketing Service, United States Department of Agriculture. Supervision, research and cartographic illustration was performed by Dr. Woodrow R. Clevinger, Market Analyst, Washington State Department of Agriculture. Mr. Richard Perry of the Washington State Department of Agriculture, and Leonard W. Orvold and D. W. Barrowman, Agricultural Statisticians, Agricultural Marketing Service, United States Department of Agriculture, gave valuable assistance. The clerical staff of the Washington Crop and Livestock Reporting Service prepared tabular material for the book.

J. D. Dwyer, Director
Washington State Department of Agriculture

Olympia, Washington
February 25, 1960

Funds for this bulletin provided by the Washington State Department of Agriculture were matched by the United States Department of Agriculture under the Research and Marketing Act of 1946.

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PART I

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Introduction

San Juan County consists of an archipelago of 172 islands in the maritime waters of northwestern Washington. In total land and inland water area (265 square miles) San Juan is the largest of four counties in America consisting of islands located in offshore waters. The other three insular counties are Island, also of Washington, and Dukes and Nantucket Counties in the Atlantic Ocean off Massachusetts. San Juan not only exceeds these other counties in total land-water area but has the largest number of islands and islets. It is, however, smaller in population than Island County, Washington. San Juan is tied with Garfield County as Washington State's smallest populated county, each having 3,200 persons in 1955.

Settled early in Pacific Northwest history by British and American citizens, the San Juan Islands were disputed and militarily occupied jointly by the two powers until a treaty in 1872 awarded them to the United States. The six larger islands were settled slowly in the late Nineteenth Century by persons employed in agriculture, fishing, lumbering, rock quarrying and ship-ping. Early agriculture was based largely upon sheep raising with some fruit, hay, grain and food crops grown mainly for local use. There was a limited export trade to the mainland and with visiting small craft and ships. In the Twentieth Century the islands were opened to scheduled ferry service and also attracted increased boat traffic, stimulating growth of a tourist and resort industry.

In terms of persons fully or partly employed, agriculture was the most important segment of the island area's economy in 1954, employing about 28 percent of the labor force. Mainly located on the three larger islands--San Juan, Orcas and Lopez--there were 327 farm units of which 127 were on a commercial basis in 1954. These commercial farms sold livestock and crops valued at over \$641,000. Leading farm products ranked in order of importance are cattle and calves, eggs, chickens, sheep, lambs and wool, hogs, milk, cream and forest products. The islands are particularly noted for sheep raising, ranking first among western Washington counties and ninth among all counties in the state.

Table of Contents

	Page
Part I. History of San Juan County Agriculture - - - - -	1
Part II. San Juan County Population - - - - -	5
Part III. Physical Description - - - - -	13
Part IV. The Pattern of Agriculture - - - - -	25
Part V. Crops - - - - -	31
Part VI. Livestock, Dairying and Poultry - - - - -	36
Part VII. Farm Marketing and Level of Living - - - - -	41
General Index - - - - -	49

History 1/

Before the settlement of white men, the present county was inhabited by seafaring Indian tribes. Using large cedar canoes for traveling, these Indians camped on the San Juan archipelago shores and lived by fishing, hunting, root and berry gathering. Little or no agriculture was recorded during the period of Indian history. The islands were rich in fisheries and deer for sustaining a primitive culture.

The San Juan Island group was explored and charted by the Spanish and British during 1791 and 1792. A Spanish expedition under Francisco Eliza entered the Straits of Juan de Fuca in 1790 and Manuel Quimper of that expedition explored the San Juan Islands. The Spanish gave names to features of the area still used such as Rosario Strait, Haro Strait, Lopez Island, San Juan Island, Patos, Orcas and Sucia Islands. In 1792, the British Expedition under Captain George Vancouver charted the same waters and made territorial claims for his government. Vancouver's charts gave names retained today, such as Georgia Straits, Bellingham Straits and Stuart Island.

Under a joint occupation treaty between the United States and Great Britain in 1819 which applied to all of the Oregon Territory north of the Columbia River, the San Juan Islands received a scattering of settlers from both nations. British interests were dominant north of the Columbia River and were administered by a chartered fur trading company--the Hudson's Bay Company. The Company generally discouraged Americans from settling in the Puget Sound region, but under treaty rights Americans came into the present Washington area in numbers ample enough to give Americans a political majority by 1845.

Increasing jurisdictional dispute over this settlement frontier started about 1825 and a treaty was concluded in 1846 which established the 49th parallel as a boundary between the United States and Canada. This treaty line, however, was not defined clearly at the time to separate the off-shore islands in the Straits of Juan de Fuca and Georgia. The Hudson Bay Company assumed that Rosario Strait was the boundary and that the San Juans were part of the chain of islands included with Vancouver Island. A scattering of American

1/ This historical summary has been derived from six sources:

- (1) Washington, A Guide to the Evergreen State (American Guide Series). Writers Program of the Works Progress Administration, State of Wash. 1943 Edition sponsored by Washington Historical Society. See pages 46, 624-631.
- (2) Richard M. Perry. The Counties of Washington. Published by Secretary of State, Olympia, Washington (mimeographed). San Juan County section.
- (3) Lucile McDonald. "Lopez: Agricultural Island of San Juan Archipelago." Seattle Times, Sunday Magazine, Oct. 19, 1958, pp. 2-3.
- (4) Lucile McDonald. "Skaw Island." Seattle Times, Sunday Magazine, Nov. 23, 1958, p. 2.
- (5) Lucile McDonald. "Under Two Flags." Seattle Times, Sunday Magazine, Nov. 16, 1958, pp. 1-2.
- (6) Lucile McDonald. "San Juan Island's Pig War." Seattle Times, Sunday Magazine, Nov. 2, 1958, pp. 2-3.

settlers in the San Juans disputed British authority during the 1850's. Tension in the area ended in a local incident called the Pig War, in which an American settler, Lyman Cutler, shot a pig belonging to a Hudson's Bay Company farm. The American settler was charged with illegal entry. About 20 American settlers on the island supported Cutler in resisting arrest and they petitioned for United States government military support to prevent their eviction from the islands.

In 1859 San Juan Island was occupied by both American and British troops to maintain order. British marines from Esquimalt on Vancouver Island commanded by Captain George Bazalette, established a garrison at Roche Harbor. American troops under Captain George Pickett established Fort San Juan at the south end of San Juan Island. Joint military occupation under various American and British commands continued without incident until 1872 when the disputed region was arbitrated by Emperor William I of Germany and awarded to the United States. The San Juan archipelago then became part of Whatcom County of Washington Territory.

The Hudson Bay Company developed the first commercial agriculture in the islands, and strongly disputed American farm settlement in the area. In 1853 this company landed 1,300 sheep on San Juan Island and founded Bellevue Farm, a large holding, for sheep raising, with Charles J. Griffin as manager. British interests expanded sheep raising and other agriculture to affirm their occupation rights. At this time there were some American squatters on small holdings in the islands who had come from the Frazer River placer gold diggings. Most noted was Lyman A. Cutler who had settled on land near Bellevue Farm to raise potatoes and cattle. Cutler's dispute with the manager, Mr. Griffin, led to the "Pig War" incident in 1859 that culminated in military occupation and arbitration of the San Juan Islands dispute.

Records of the earliest settlers on all the islands are obscure. Many of these settlers were temporary and followed a variety of occupations. On Lopez Island, settlement began as early as 1852 by Indian traders and deerskin hunters. Deerskins were one of the earliest commodities shipped from Lopez. Among the first settlers on Lopez were Hiram F. Hutchinson, Sam Hinton, Sampson Chadwick and Edmund Cochran.

John Keddy was a prominent pioneer sheep raiser on San Juan Island. He sold mutton to American and British troop garrisons during the Pig War occupation and sold breeding stock to settlers on neighboring islands. Robert Firth, the last manager for Hudson's Bay Company on San Juan Island, became an American citizen and filed a homestead on part of Bellevue Farm after it was made American territory. These men were prominent in pioneering the sheep industry.

Shaw Island was settled first by Will Shaw and Henry Hudson, who developed fruit growing. Hudson planted a sizeable fruit orchard and early steamboats stopped at Hudson Bay landing to load fruit. George Griswold, another early settler on Shaw Island, raised fruit and operated a prune dryer. Several prune dryers were in operation before 1880 and this semi-perishable fruit found a good market outlet with ships visiting Puget Sound.

Waldron Island was settled in the 1860's by John E. Brown, Sinclair A. McDonald and three German families, those of Fred Krundiak, Ernest Rehorst and

Ferdinand Beatz. The early Waldron settlers lived by fishing, selling fuel-wood to lime kilns and quarrying sandstone on Waldron and Stuart Islands. Dogfish oil, which found a market in Victoria, Canada, as a lubricant, was a cash product of the Waldron Island settlers. Limited pioneer agriculture on Waldron Island was based on sheep raising and home fruit and vegetable raising. Sheep raising has remained as its major activity.

San Juan County was officially established as a separate county by act of the Washington Territorial Legislature October 31, 1873. Prior to this it had been part of Whatcom County. Friday Harbor, main town on the island of San Juan, was established as the county seat. The name of Friday Harbor was derived from a Hawaiian native called Friday, who was employed by the Hudson Bay Company as a sheep herdsman in this vicinity in the 1850's.

Early settlement was slow and by 1880 the Census showed only 948 persons residing in the various islands of the San Juan archipelago. Most of the settlers were on the islands of San Juan and Lopez where terrain and lighter forest cover were more permissive to agriculture. Land titles were not well established and there was limited public domain open for homesteaders under the Homestead Act of 1862. Most settlers were compelled to purchase land from previous land title owners or from timber and other land holding companies.

Early industrial activity in commercial fishing, sandstone and limestone quarrying and logging began to attract more workers after 1880. Many of these took up small farms along the shores to supplement seasonal work. Sheep and cattle raising and subsistence agriculture were generally adopted as the most practical form of agriculture. Semi-perishable products which could be shipped out from farms included live sheep, wool, hides, butter, winter apples, potatoes and dried prunes. Important raw materials shipped out included sandstone from Waldron and Stuart Islands, limestone and lime from Roche Harbor and steamer cordwood, sawlogs and rough lumber and timbers from Orcas and other wooded islands.

On an economic base of limestone quarrying, extractive industries, livestock, dairy and poultry farming, tourist-resort and some local food processing, population in the islands reached a peak of 3,605 by 1920. Ferry service was established and commercial agriculture had opportunity to participate in supplying a growing Puget Sound regional market. A vegetable canning industry, a fish canning industry and a cooperative dairy plant were established at Friday Harbor. In 1920 the dairy industry was stimulated by founding of the San Juan Cooperative Creamery Company at Friday Harbor and the Richardson Creamery at Richardson, on Lopez Island.

Agricultural history has been influenced by several private and public agencies. An important early influence was that of the Hudson's Bay Company which pioneered sheep and livestock raising. The shepp industry has continued through the decades. Pioneer dairymen who formed the San Juan Dairy Cooperative made significant contribution to the economy. Valuable technical guidance was provided by the Extension Service and the Mount Vernon and Puyallup Agricultural Experiment Stations of Washington State University. County Agents located at Friday Harbor were influential in many ways in the progress of farming and rural life. Work of the Soil Conservation Service and Agricultural Stabilization Committees has also been important in guiding the course of groups and individual farmers in a changing pattern of agriculture.